

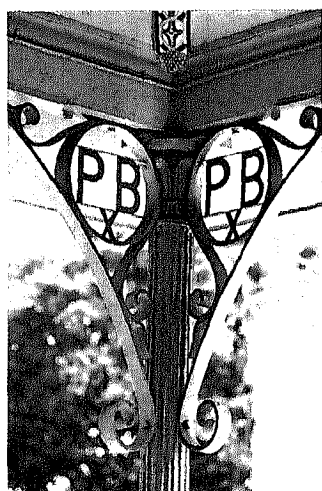
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

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Above:
Detail of *Maderoto*,
which was erected in
1922, during the reign
of Paku Buwono X
(r. 1893-1939).

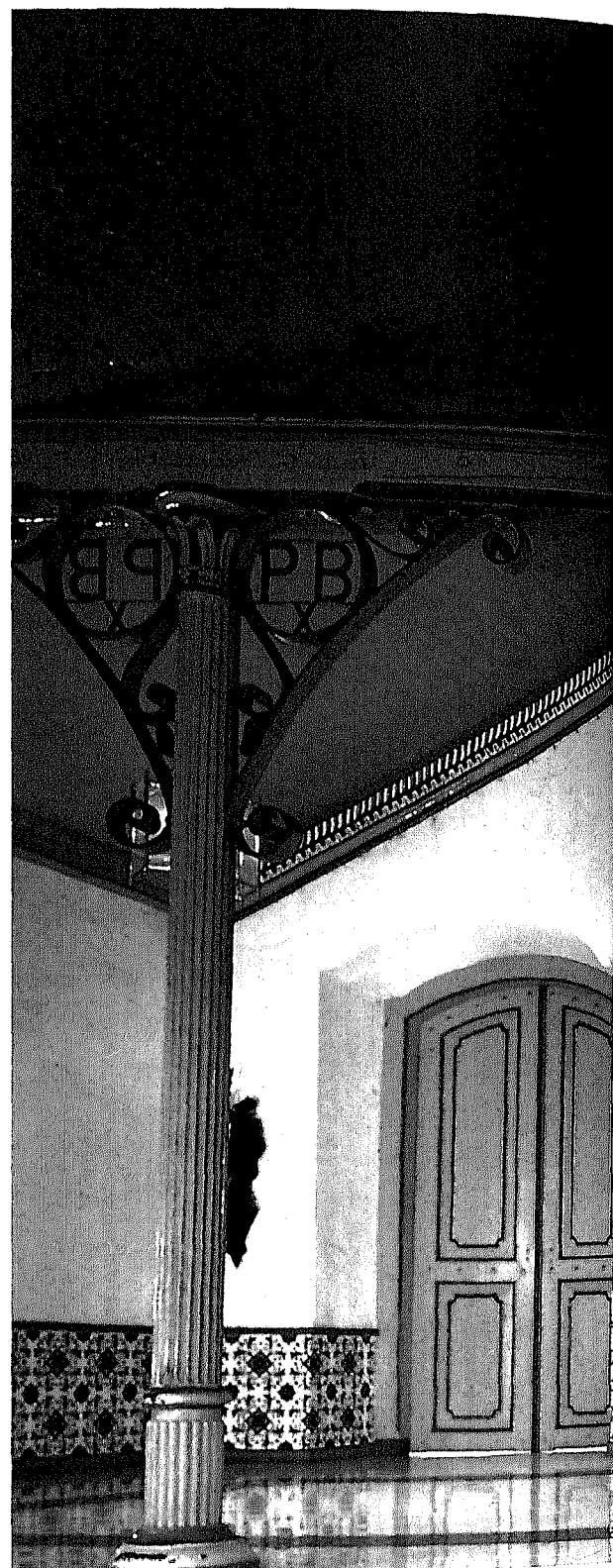
Kori Kamandungan

Kori Kamandungan is the main entrance to the court. It is built as a gateway of the *kori kupu tarung* type, pointing to its 3 double doors, the central one higher and wider than the two on either side of it. The word *Kamandungan* is derived from *mandung*, 'to stop', meaning that anyone entering the palace should stop here for a moment to prepare oneself, mentally and physically. On the three walls enclosing the three adjacent gates are large mirrors: those who feel ready to enter into the royal presence are given a final opportunity to examine themselves, ensuring that everything is still in its proper place. *Kori Kamandungan* thus symbolizes that one should be introspective and honest with oneself. When someone is ignorant, one should act accordingly and not pretend to feel smart, and if something is bad it shouldn't be presented as something good. Here one should, as it were, come to one's senses.

Sri Makutho Rojo

Hovering above the central *Kori Kamandungan* gate is a large emblem, depicting Karaton Surakarta's red and white flag, various weapons, and blossoming cotton branches enclosing an oval shield which depicts the earth pierced by a nail, the sun, moon, and a star; a *makutho* (crown) tops the composition. This allegorical image is known as *Sri Makutho Rojo*, and is an ancient symbol of Mataram's court. The weapons symbolize the realm, always alert and on guard in order to keep the peace in the land. The blossoming cotton plant represents the endeavour to maintain the prosperity of the country and its people.

The symbolism of the objects depicted inside the oval form points to the position of the ruler, whose name, Paku Buwono, literally means 'Nail of the World'. The sun, *suryo*, points to the name of Amangkurat IV of Kartasura (r. 1719-27); the moon, *sasongko*, points to the name of K.G.P.H. Purboyo, also



from the Kartasura period; the star, *sulomo* in Javanese, symbolise the name of another prince of Kartasura. The blood tie between these aristocrats, considered to be the founding fathers of the present Paku Buwono dynasty, is further symbolized by the image of the earth pierced by a nail.



Finally, heading south, one has entered *Kori Kamandungan*, the court's main entrance gate. After one more introspective glance in the giant mirror placed right in the middle of the dividing wall one now has to circumvent, one reaches the court's first inner courtyard, *Srimanganti*. Now one approaches the center, or 'heart' of the *karaton*.

Above:
Three adjacent doorways of *Kori Kamandungan*,
the court's main entrance gate.



Above:
Srimanganti gate seen from the Bangsal Smorokoto.

Srimanganti, the way to the 'heart' of the *karaton*

The *Srimanganti* area is south of *Kori Kamandungan*. The name *Srimanganti* stems from *sri*, 'king', 'ruler', and *manganti*, 'to wait'. This area consists of several buildings and structures around a courtyard. It serves as an area where both important guests and high placed dignitaries are greeted, by the ruler or some of his other relatives, or where they had to wait before they were admitted to the inner palace.

The courtyard itself is dominated by two large open structures or *pendopo* on its east and west, and by another gateway on its south, *Kori Srimanganti*. The western *pendopo*, facing east, is called *Bangsai Morokoto* or *Smorokoto*,

Asmorokoto in full. *Asmorokoto* derives its meaning from the Javanese expression *dawuh kang nengsemake*, 'gratifying words'. It also comes from the Arab term '*marocog coto*', 'preserving whatever exists because thus is its fate'. *Bangsai Morokoto* was used by the high placed *Bupati Lebet* courtiers to wait and to gather on their way to meet the ruler. It was also the place where gifts or honours were presented to these dignitaries, and to inaugurate new *Panewu Mantri* officials. In Mataram's bureaucratic hierarchy the *Bupati Lebet* were high officials in charge of matters concerning the realm's administration. *Panewu Mantri* were lower ranking, often regional aristocrats, but who held a position at the top of this lower-ranked class of officials.

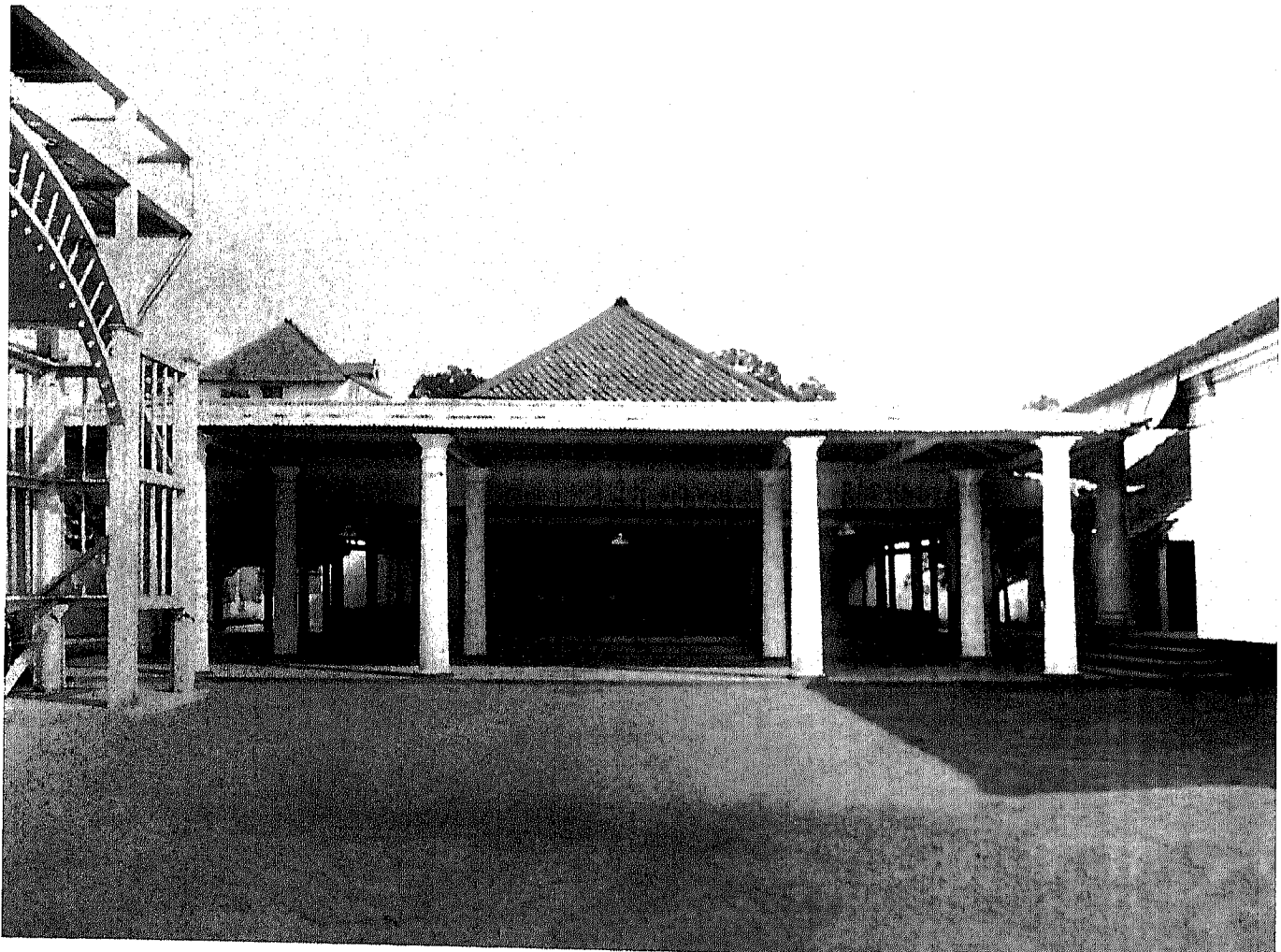


Left:
Bangsai Smorokoto.



Above:
Bangsal Smorokoto on the west side of the *Srimanganti* courtyard is often used for receptions, formal and informal, and court rituals, like this *selamatan* (ritual communal meal) for high ranking court officials.

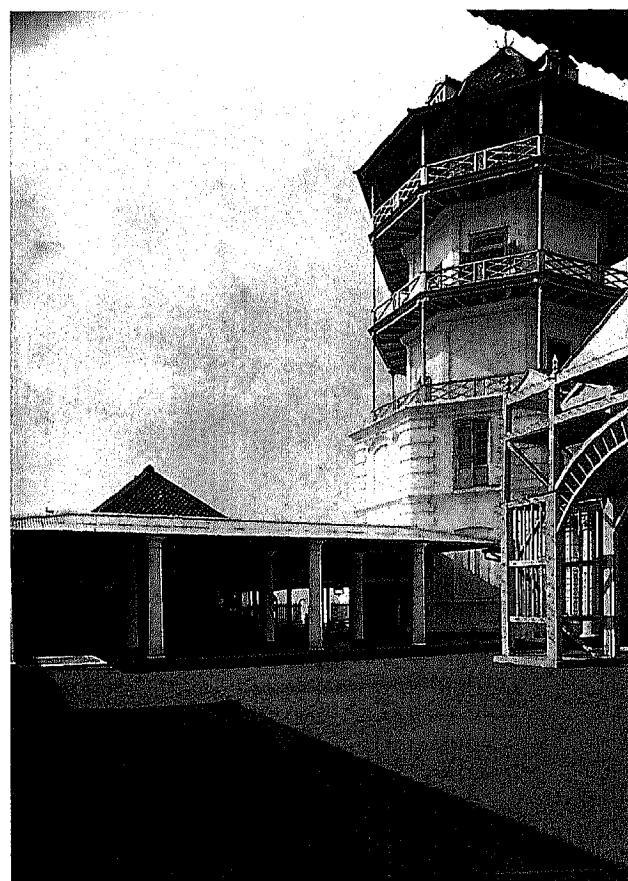
Below:
Bangsal Smorokoto.



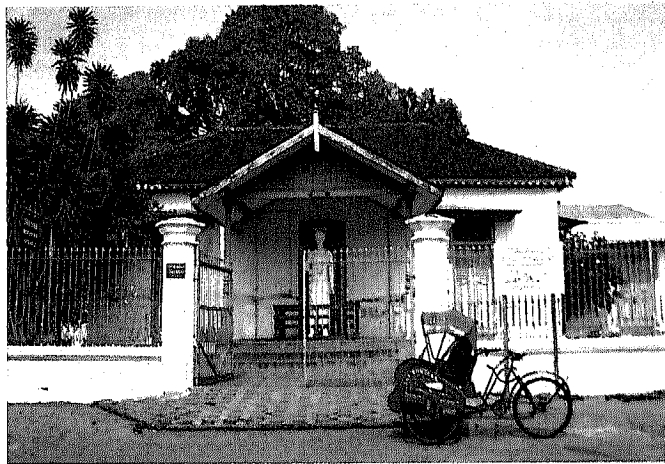


Left:
Early photo of
Kori Srimanganti
Lor, with its
characteristic
emblems, symbols,
and the *Karaton's*
coat of arms. Its
guards are seen on
the left and right.

The other large open building in the eastern part of the *Srimanganti* courtyard, facing west, is called *Bangsai Marcukundo*. This hall was used for military purposes and a place for the officers of the palace guard to meet the ruler. It was also used to pass sentences on the princes and other members of the royal family, and courtiers who had committed a crime. The name *marcukundo* can be interpreted in several ways. In Javanese, it is said to come from the expression '*kondo kang sereng*', 'harsh words spoken'. This is closely connected to the name *Smorokoto*, the *bangsal* on the other side of the courtyard, which means 'sweet words spoken'. In *Kawi* (Old Javanese) it can mean 'a place where fire burns', or a symbol of anger. It can also be connected with Arabic '*marudsul kuloh*', meaning 'to send off a necessary mission'. Both *pendopo* at *Srimanganti* are intensively used, for festive purposes, receptions, and meetings. *Bangsai Marcukundo* is also used to store a beautifully worked, wooden construction once used for the circumcision ceremonies of princes.



Above:
Panggung Songgobuwono and *Bangsai Marcukundo*.



Above:
Entrance to *Panti
Pidono* and *Sidikoro*,
the court's hall of
justice and prison.

Behind *Bangsai Marcukundo* is a small uncomfortable prison especially for the royal family, *Panti Pitono*. The court's hall of justice, situated on the west behind *Bangsai Marcukundo* and its prison is called *Sidikoro*. It has its own entrance, west of the *karaton*, around the corner of *Kamandungan*.

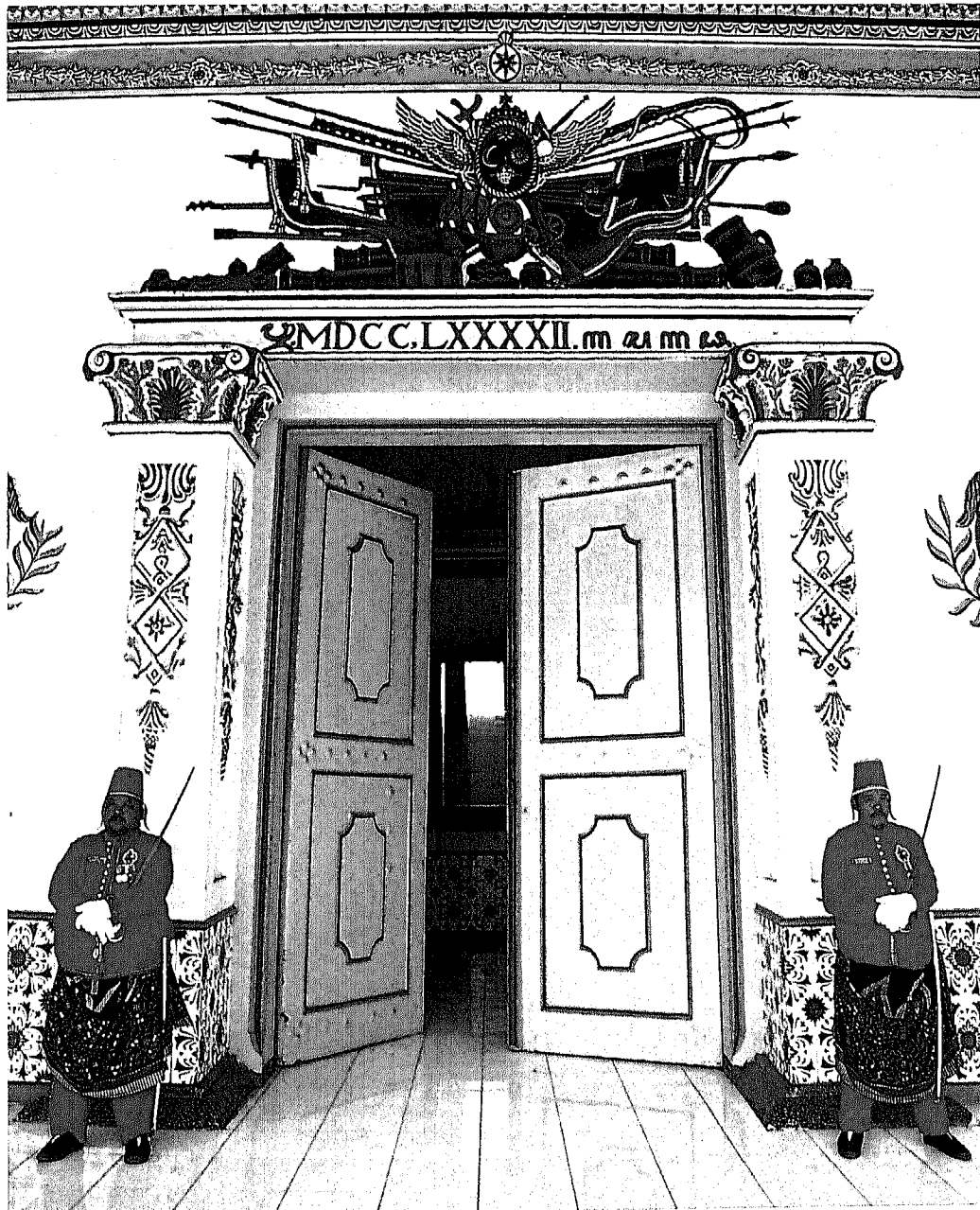
Crossing the *Srimanganti* courtyard, passing *Bangsai Smorokoto* and *Marcukundo* one reaches the entrance to the inner palace, *Kori Srimanganti Lor*. Another *Sri Makutho Rojo* shield decorates its doorway. Beneath it is written in Roman numerals MDCCCLXXX (AD 1780). The Javanese letters *ga-la-ga-pa* also found here refer to the Javanese year AJ 1718. On the gate's left and right side are elegant painted blue and white decorations of blossoming cotton and rice, symbolizing fertility and prosperity.

Below:
Grand wooden
structure used in
former times for the
circumcision ceremony
of young princes.
It now stands in
Bangsai Marcukondo,
in the eastern part of
the *Srimanganti*
courtyard.

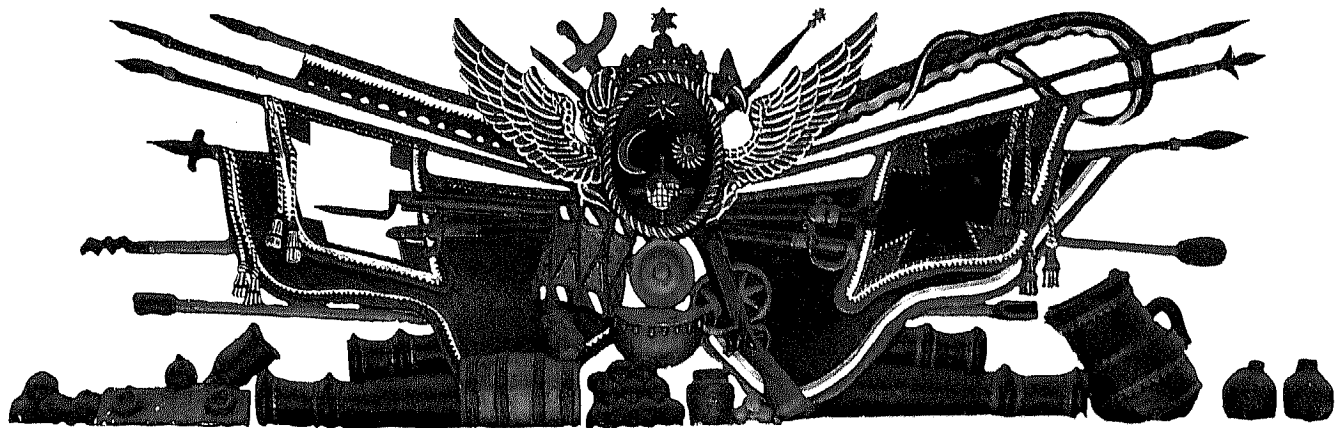


East of the gateway is a sturdy looking corner room facing west, which was used for the offices of *wedonos* (high-ranking court officials). Above its doorway is another royal symbol and depictions of royal weapons. The allegory symbolizes that the court and its ruler are obliged to put an end to all conflicts and create an atmosphere of unity and unification. It is also a chronogram. *Senjoto*, 'weapons' (the number 5); *kasaliro* (8); *rasaning*, 'the feeling of' (6); *narendro*, 'the king' (1), giving 5 – 8 – 6 – 1 or AJ 1685 / AD 1754, well into the reign of Paku Buwono III.

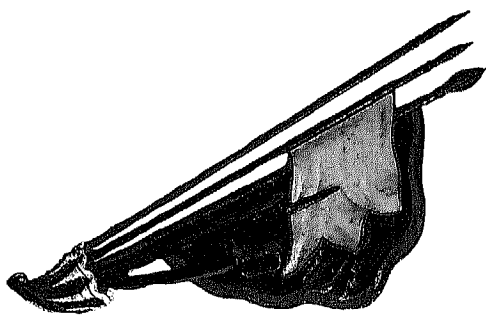
Adjacent to *Kori Srimanganti Lor* on its west side is yet another room, facing east, above the doorway of which is a picture of a man carrying various weapons. This too is an allegory, and signifies that the ruler is *murbo waseso*, 'obligated to judge and punish evil-doers'. It is also another chronogram for the year AJ 1685/ AD 1754, the period of Paku Buwono III (r.1749-88).



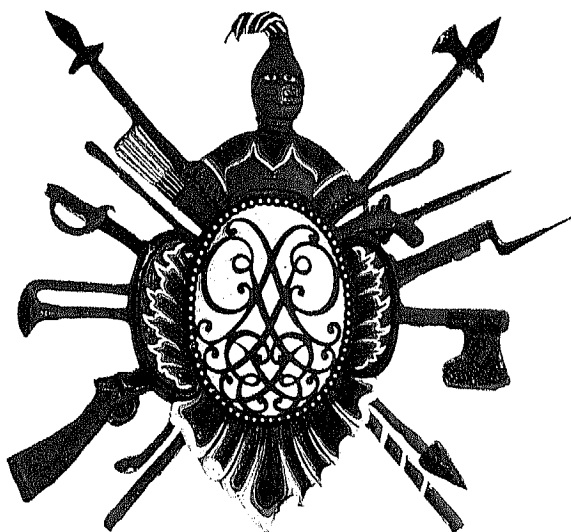
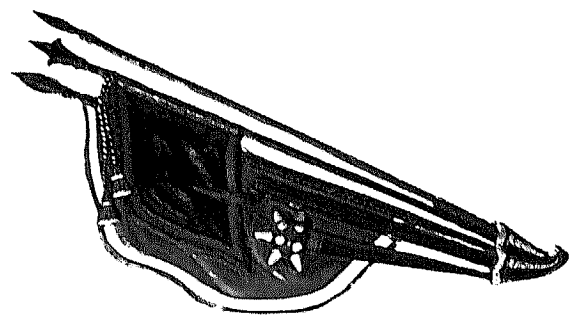
Left:
Kori Srimanganti Lor,
the entrance to the
court's inner and most
sacred part, guarded
by two ceremonial
guards of the
Sorogeni regiment.



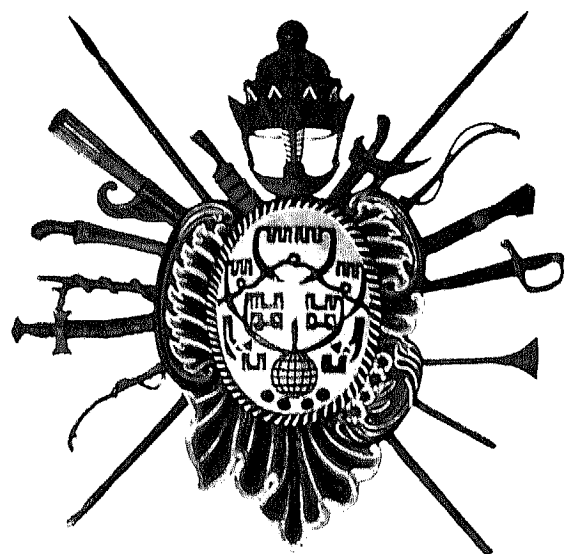
Karaton Surakarta's coat of arms. The allegory combines various traditional, Javanese, and European weapons, surrounding the court's emblem, which symbolizes the universe. It combines representations of the sun, the moon, and the stars under the crown of Mataram.



Decorations in the form of various flags in the eastern and western corner of the Srimanganti gate.



Highly symbolic decorative shield from the time of Paku Buwono X (r.1893-1939). It is situated on the wall of the reception area east of the Srimanganti gate.



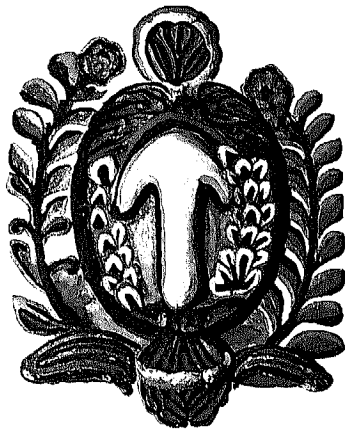
Decorative shield in the wall of the guard house west of the Srimanganti gate. Its texts refer to Paku Buwono IV (r.1788-1820).



Commemorative shield on the southern wall of the *Srimanganti* gate, placed here after extensive repairs were carried out in 1897, during the reign of Paku Buwono X (r.1893-1939).



Commemorative shield on the southern wall of the court's main entrance, *Kamandungan*, marking a period of repairs and restoration.



Pair of highly symbolic decorations on the pillars on the south side of the *Srimanganti* gate. The two stucco shields represent the female *yoni* and male *lingga* symbol; combined they symbolize the holy union of man and woman as well as, according to Javanese philosophy, the universe.



Highly meaningful decoration known as *Kebo Dungkul*, symbolizing man's abandonment of all worldly existence. It decorates the north wall of the *Srimanganti Kidul* gate.



Decoration in the form of a string of *melathi* flowers, which can be found on many of the court's buildings; they are said to symbolize purity as well as man's vertical relationship with the macrocosm.



Highly significant decoration on the south wall of the *Srimanganti Kidul* gate. It symbolizes the next stage of our existence, *hidup langgeng*, after abandoning one's worldly life.

Right:
View of the central courtyard, *Pelataran Kedhaton*, planted with 48 shady *Sawa Kecik* trees.



Below right:
Abdidalem praying and *caos dahar* (burning incense) on *Pelataran Kedhaton* or central courtyard, in the direction of *Dalem Ageng*, the court's most sacred part.

Passing through *Kori Srimanganti Lor* one encounters another dividing wall with a large mirror. Here looking in the mirror signifies that one has symbolically begun to enter 'heaven' and is on the way to meet one's inner self, one's 'soul'.

Kori Srimanganti Lor is a large gate, with an extensive interior through which one has to pass. On the interior walls are large images, in several shades of blue and bright white stucco and plaster, symbolizing various elements of one's journey to the subsequent plane of spiritual perfection. The combination of reliefs on *Kori Srimanganti's* inner walls all point to one's acceptance of unhesitatingly abandoning all worldly needs, like the desire for sex, food, clothing, titles, ranks, etc. Only after one is able to leave all these behind can one enter the realm of perfection, a phase known as *pamoring kawulo Gusti*.

On the west side of the inner gate is a protected enclosure where in former times the women guards to the inner courtyard, *Nyai Regol* used to sit. They would scrutinize any visitor who passed this gate going to the center of the court, or any of the members of the royal household and royal family going out.

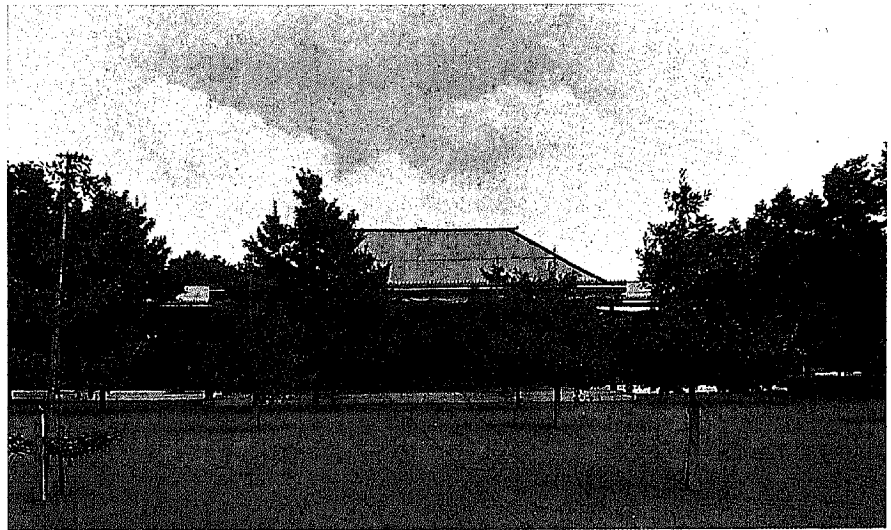


Pelataran Kedhaton, the 'heart' of the karaton:

Karaton Dalem is the inner palace where the ruler and his family live. This area consists of two sections. One is dominated by those who are in service to the state and its subjects, and the other, which is 'closed', *winadi*, is where the ruler and his family reside.

Pelataran Kedhaton, the closed inner courtyard, is a broad, level place, covered with sand, and planted with *sawo kecil* trees for shade. It is surrounded by various state and private buildings and structures. Entering this spacious place it is hard not to experience a feeling of great harmony and balance. The locations, functions, and forms of the various structures here, great and small, are based on knowledge handed down in philosophical and other texts such as *kawruh Kejawen*, 'Javanese philosophy', and *Ilmu Kasampurnan*, 'the special knowledge of perfection'.

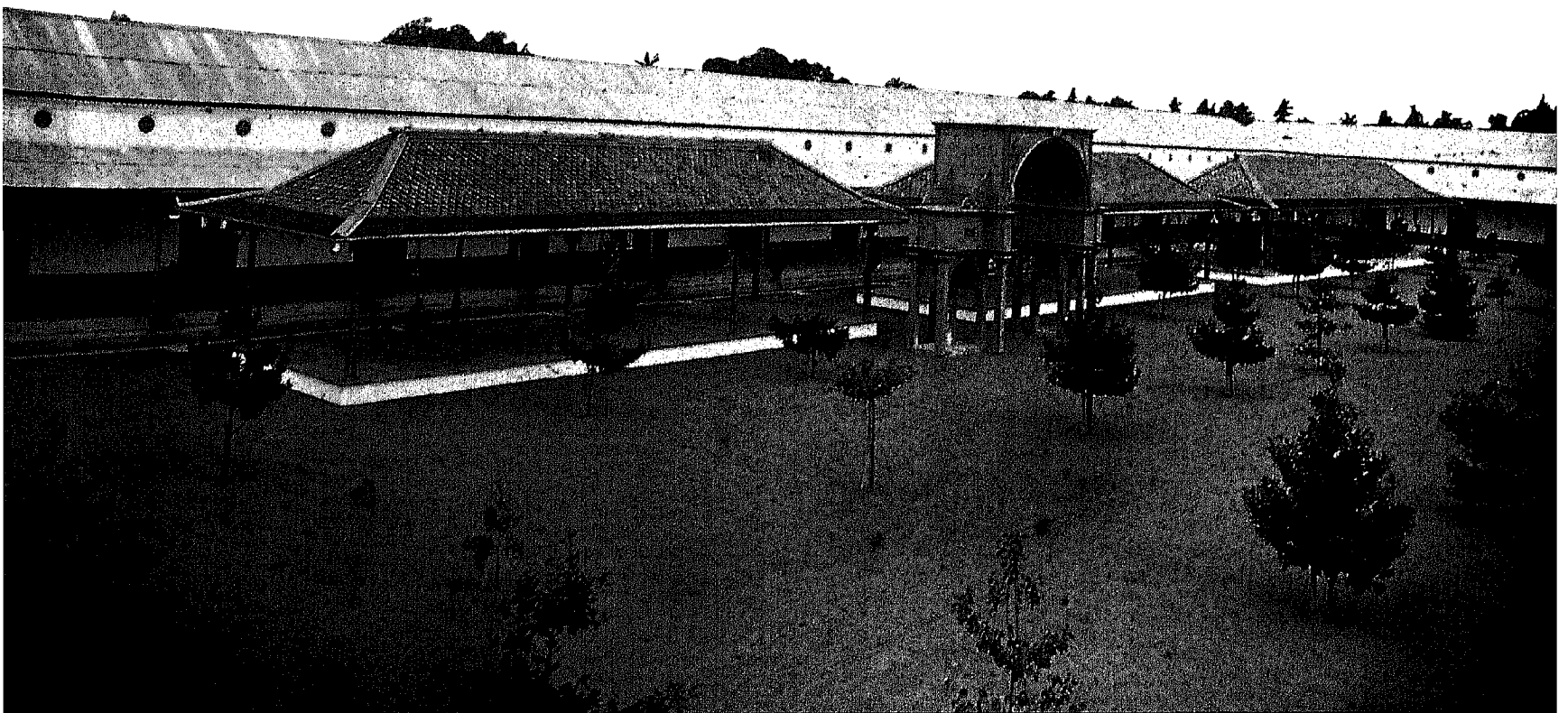
Originally the *karaton's palataran* was planted with a variety of trees such as *Wuni*, *Jambu*, and others, but during the reign of Paku Buwono X, in the first half of the 20th century these were removed and replaced by exactly 48 *Sawo Kecil*. They signified the hope that they would create an atmosphere of *sarwo becik*, 'everything completely beautiful, good, and pleasant in every way'.



Above:
The court's main audience hall, *Pendopo Ageng* and *Pelataran Kedhaton* (central court yard).

Below:
Pelataran Kedhaton (central courtyard) and the structures *Bangsai Pradonggo* (left and central) and *Bangsai Bujono* (right).

According to some, having reached the *pelataran Kedhaton* means that one has entered a higher plane of existence, after having fought and conquered a series of temptations, trials, and examinations. It means that one has successfully achieved victory in confronting the trials of life. This finally brings one in to a state of great calm and serenity. One may now continue one's pursuit of reaching the goal of inner and spiritual perfection. Others would say that the *karaton's* inner courtyard and the buildings and structures around it can both seen as a manifestation of 'heaven', or as the place where subjects unite with their Lord, *manunggaling kawulo-gusti*. As mentioned before, this is considered one of the highest ideals in Javanese mysticism.



Karaton Dalem, the 'inner court'

On the east, north, and south sides of the courtyard are several rows of buildings, all facing the *palataran* area, and most of which are used as offices of some kind. On the *pelataran*'s north side, in a row from west to east, are situated *Sasono Wilopo*, the office

that serves as the royal secretariat, and *Nguntorosono*, the vestibule of which was used as a seating area for high-ranking aristocrats, waiting for the ruler to appear. Tucked away in the northwest corner is the *Kamar Nyonyah*, another seating area where the Dutch and other foreign lady guests waited for *karaton* ceremonies to start.



Above:
Court official in one of the offices near *Pelataran Kedhaton*.

Opposite Page:
Serambi ('vestibule') in front of the *Sasono Wilopo* offices.